

SUKU SIMALUNGUN:  
AN ETHNIC GROUP IN SEARCH OF REPRESENTATION\*

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Sin Raja sini Purba,  
Sin Dolog sini Panei,  
Naidja pe lang marubah,  
Asal na marholong atei.

From Raja or from Purba,  
From Dolog or from Panei,  
Where one comes from doesn't matter,  
As long as he has compassion.

---A Simalungun Batak proverb.

Introduction

Simalungun (pop. about 525,000) is one of eleven regencies (or second-level self-governing regions) in the province of North Sumatra, and is located about two hours by car or bus south and west on a paved all-weather road from the provincial capital of Medan on the east coast. Approximately in the center of the regency is the municipality of Pematangsiantar (also called P. Siantar or Siantar), a market and administrative center and the second largest city of North Sumatra, with a population of approximately 113,000. At the head of the regency government (which is separate from that of the municipality) is the Kepala Daerah (Regional Head, also called bupati or regent), who is appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs from a list of nominees presented by the regency legislature (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah-Gotong Rojong or DPRD-GR, Mutual Help People's Regional Representative Council).<sup>1</sup> The Regional Head is responsible for general administration and coordination of the various central government bureaus

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1. For an analysis of the institutions of regional government, see Legge, John D., Central Authority and Regional Autonomy in Indonesia: A Study in Local Administration 1950-1960, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961.

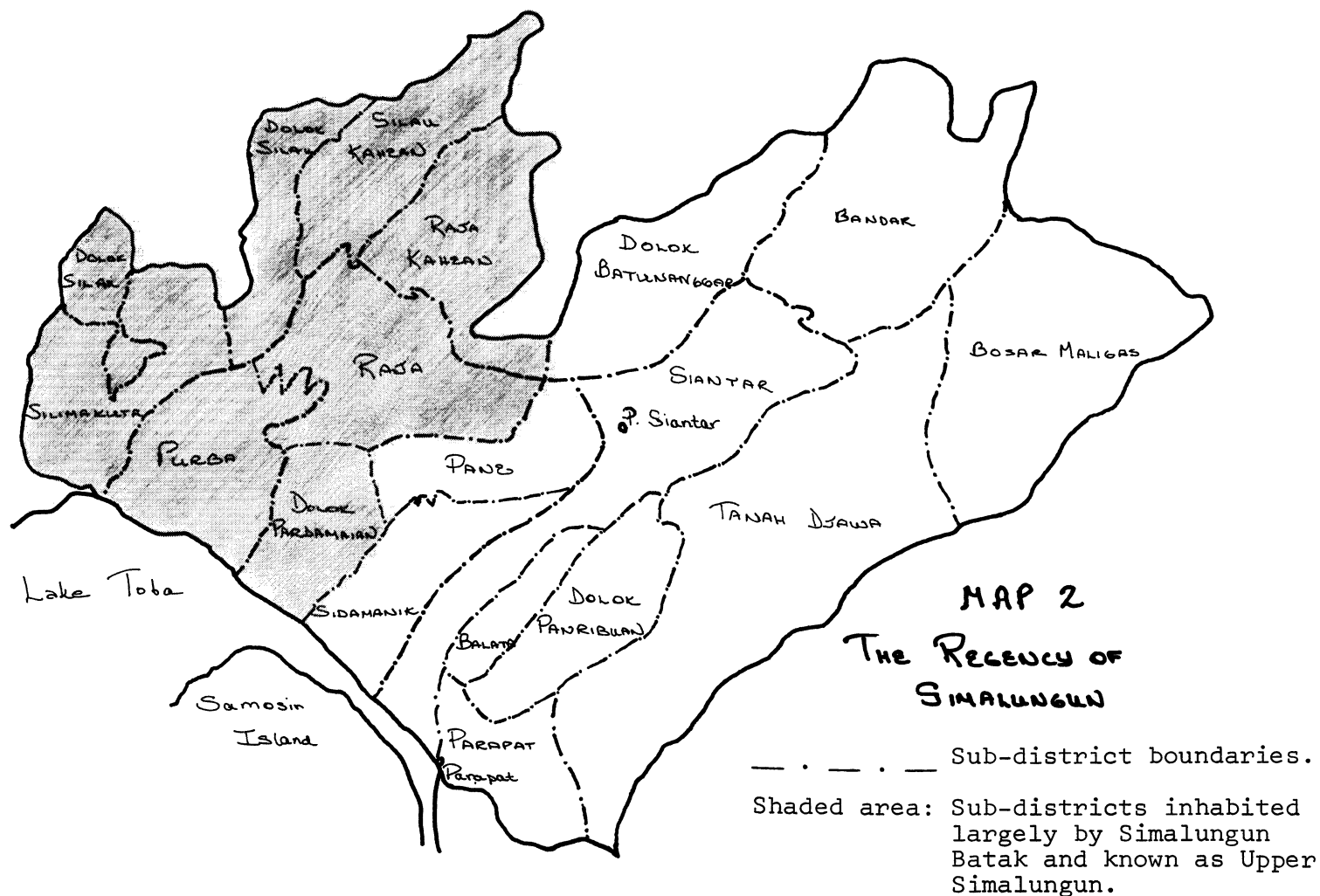
# MAP 1 The Province of NORTH SUMATRA



- - - - Provincial Boundary.

———— Boundary of the Regency  
of Simalungun

(Source: Ikatan Motor Indonesia, Peta Djalan untuk Automobilst dan Pelantjong, 1956. Scale is 1:750,000.)



(Source: Map of Simalungun, in Pemerintahan Daerah Tkt. II Simalungun, Laporan Tahun 1963, P. Siantar, 1963, p. 2. Estimated scale 1:400,000. Also see Appendix I below, p. 28.)

located in the region. He also serves as chairman of the DPRD-GR, which is authorized to pass legislation concerning the "household affairs" of the regency, and of the Front Nasional (National Front), a representative body charged with providing "social support" for and "social control" of the policies of the government. The seventeen sub-districts (ketjamatan) in Simalungun are headed by administrative officials of the territorial bureaucracy who are appointed by the Regional Head. The lowest unit of government is the village or village complex (kepenghuluan), of which there are 530 in Simalungun. Each kepenghuluan is headed by an (in theory) popularly elected penghulu, who is responsible for the settlement of disputes within the village and serves both as the local agent of the central government and the spokesman for his people to the sub-district officer.

The regency of Simalungun is a multi-ethnic, economically diverse region which has been subject to a great deal of social change in recent history. Toward the end of the nineteenth century Simalungun consisted of a number of traditional kingdoms (keradjaan)\* and was peopled by perhaps 75,000 Simalungun or Eastern Batak, so called to distinguish them from the North Tapanuli Batak of Lake Toba and the Silindung Valley, the South Tapanuli Batak of Mandailing, Angkola and Sipirok, and the Karo Batak to the north; these groups speak generally mutually unintelligible languages.

The multi-ethnic characteristics of present-day Simalungun are in large part a result of the Liberal Policy of the colonial period, which encouraged private investment in Indonesia and led to the large-scale growth of European-owned rubber, tea, tobacco and palm-oil plantations in the east coast lowlands of Sumatra, including part of Simalungun (now consisting of the six subdistricts collectively called Lower Simalungun). Javanese were imported to work on the plantations and, in Lower Simalungun, soon outnumbered the indigenous people. North Tapanuli Batak, skilled in the techniques of wet rice agriculture, were encouraged by the Dutch to move into Simalungun to provide food for the plantation workers. Many of them had received a rudimentary education in Christian missionary schools and secured employment as plantation and government clerks. As the North Tapanuli Batak came in and settled the best rice land, the less aggressive Simalungun people moved up into the less fertile foothills of the Bukit Barisan mountain range, an area which now comprises seven subdistricts and is called Upper Simalungun. During this period Pematangsiantar grew from a small village and seat of one of the traditional kingdoms into a commercial and administrative center large enough by the 1920's to become a municipality. Trading prospects attracted a great variety of immigrants, including

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\* See Appendix I, p. 28.

Moslem Batak from South Tapanuli, Coastal Malays, Chinese and a smattering of people from other parts of the archipelago.

In contemporary Simalungun the principal social cleavages among the Indonesian population are ethnic. Four main groups are involved: the Simalungun Batak, comprising perhaps 30 per cent of the total population; the North Tapanuli Batak, about 20 per cent; the Javanese, about 20 per cent; and the South Tapanuli Batak, perhaps 15 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Patterns of cleavages crosscutting or consistent with the ethnic are complex; we shall briefly describe two of the most important, religion and socio-economic class. The North Tapanuli and Simalungun Batak are predominantly Protestant Christian, although the latter group contains significant Islamic, Roman Catholic and animistic minorities.<sup>3</sup> For several decades one church, the HKBP (Huria Kristen Batak Protestan, Batak Protestant Christian Church), served both groups, but in 1952 the Simalungun Protestants, unhappy over what they felt to be North Tapanuli domination, became autonomous within the framework of the Batak church. In 1964, with the establishment of the GKPS (Geredja Kristen Protestan Simalungun, Simalungun Protestant Christian Church), Simalungun Christians became totally independent of the HKBP. The Javanese and South Tapanuli Batak are Moslem, but there is a vast difference between the two groups in terms of their adherence to and practice of the Islamic faith. The great majority of Javanese in Simalungun are of the abangan persuasion, a more syncretistic, animistic and Hindu-influenced variant of Islam, while the South Tapanuli people belong to the more purely Islamic santri element.<sup>4</sup> It is largely this latter group which participates in religious activities, the Islamic educational system and Moslem social organizations.

In the post-independence period economic and occupational

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2. The Chinese make up the bulk of the remaining 15 per cent. These percentages represent crude estimates based on census data concerning religious affiliation and province of birth, and on informed guessing.
  3. 51 per cent of the population of the seven subdistricts of Upper Simalungun is Protestant, 4.5 per cent is Catholic, 8.8 per cent is Moslem, and 35.6 per cent is animist ("primitif"). Computed from data in Pemerintahan Daerah Tkt. II Simalungun, Lapuran Tahun 1963 (Government of the Second Level Region of Simalungun, Report for the Year 1963), P. Siantar, 1963, p. 115.
  4. On the abangan-santri division, see Clifford Geertz, The Religion of Java, Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960.

cleavages consistent with the ethnic divisions have begun to break down as a result of urbanization and increasing educational opportunities. The North Tapanuli Batak remain, as a group, the most highly educated, and fill a disproportionate number of government and plantation offices. They also, with the Chinese, dominate the shops and market stalls of Siantar, although in the last decade they have come under increasing pressure in this sphere from the Simalungun Batak. The South Tapanuli Batak are mostly traders, teachers in Islamic schools, or government officials, particularly in the small towns ringing the plantations. The Javanese for the most part remain on the plantations as workers, although many of them have moved to Siantar and found employment as servants or unskilled laborers. Finally, the Simalungun Batak, while numerically the largest group in the regency, have only a very thin layer of educated, urbanized individuals; most of these are employed as ministers in the Simalungun church, school teachers, government officials and merchants.

In terms of residential patterns there is a relatively high degree of segregation along ethnic lines. Upper Simalungun is inhabited almost exclusively by Simalungun Batak, with some admixture of Karonese along its western border and North Tapanuli Batak in the south. Lower Simalungun contains Javanese and North and South Tapanuli Batak, but the Javanese live on the plantations, the North Tapanuli Batak in villages near the plantations and in the towns, and the South Tapanuli Batak mostly in the towns. The municipality of Siantar, in pre-revolutionary days, consisted of two villages, bisected by a river: Kampung Kristen, inhabited by North Tapanuli Batak; and Kampung Melaju, containing a majority of South Tapanuli Moslems and clusters of Javanese and others. This pattern is slowly breaking down, but in each of the ten 'village' units in contemporary Siantar one or another ethnic group predominates.

The relationship between ethnic cleavages and the political party system in Simalungun/Siantar is complex, and it is an oversimplification to view party politics in the region as merely an extension of ethnic loyalties and conflicts. It is true, however, that there is a considerable measure of ethnic group identification with particular parties: North Tapanuli Batak with Parkindo, South Tapanuli Batak with Masjumi, and the Javanese, although more divided in their partisan loyalties, with the PNI.<sup>5</sup> Of the four major ethnic

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5. The relationship between ethnicity and the party system in Simalungun/Siantar is a major theme of the author's dissertation-in-progress, Politics in Simalungun: A Study in Integration.

communities only one, the Simalungun Batak, has failed to support a national party, i.e., a party with significant support outside the region and which has played, at one time or another, a role in national-level political life. The purpose of this paper is to explore the distinctive political development of the suku Simalungun and the attempts of its leaders to relate themselves and their community to the politics of independent Indonesia.

Social Change Among the Simalungun Batak:  
The Differentiation of Elites and the  
Development of Political Loyalties

Before the arrival of the Dutch toward the close of the nineteenth century, political leadership in Simalungun was monopolized by a traditional aristocracy.<sup>6</sup> Although competition for power between and within the kingdoms of Simalungun was apparently common in the pre-colonial period, it was exclusively a game of the aristocracy. Invested with supernaturally-sanctioned authority (which defined the gap between elite and non-elite), they also dominated the religious and economic lives of their subjects. No alternative leadership groups or institutions existed in the society which might have mounted a challenge to their dominant position. Marga (sibs, exogamous patrilineal descent groups) and lineage segments, generally numerically small in any particular locality and/or integrated into the traditional power structure, lacked formal organization and were incapable of opposing the aristocracy.

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6. Sources on traditional government in Simalungun include the following:

Tideman, J., Simeloengen: Het land der Timoer-Bataks in zijn vroegere isolatie en zijn ontwikkeling tot een deel van het cultuurgebied van de Oostkust van Sumatra (Simalungun: The Land of the Eastern Batak in its former isolation and its development into a part of the plantation area of the East Coast of Sumatra), Leiden: S. O. van Doesburgh, 1922; Kroesen, J. A., "Eene reis door de landschappen Tandjung Kassau, Siantar en Tanah Djawa, Residentie Oostkust van Sumatra," (A trip through the regions of Tandjung Kassau, Siantar and Tanah Djawa, East Coast of Sumatra Residency), Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde, Deel XXXIX, 1897, pp. 229-304; Kroesen, J. A. "Nota omtrent de Bataklanden (speciaal Simeloengen)," (A note on the Bataklands (especially Simalungun)), Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde, Deel LXI, 1899, pp. 253-285.

Dutch colonial rule brought *rust en orde* to Simalungun by prohibiting warfare among the keradjaan and by strengthening the position of the radja vis-à-vis lesser aristocrats. At the same time, the Dutch presence sowed the seeds of future conflict by opening channels to individual advancement within the society independent of the traditional elite. Increasingly in the twentieth century there emerged a new elite group among the Simalungun Batak whose claim to influence rested not on traditional supernatural power but on modern education, leadership of the Christian and Islamic religious communities and, to a lesser extent, commercial and entrepreneurial success.

Modern education, introduced by European and North Tapanuli Batak Christian missionaries and Moslem ulama from South Tapanuli and East Sumatra, created a new civil servant class whose skills were required both by the Dutch in their government and plantation offices and by the traditional rulers in their own increasingly westernized administrations. The development of Pematangsiantar and other towns as commercial centers serving the needs of the plantations and the much-enlarged population of the region simultaneously contributed to the rise of a small merchant and entrepreneurial class among the educated Simalungun Batak.

The growth of Christianity and (on a smaller scale) Islam also entailed the creation of an indigenous religious leadership centered in the church and church-school hierarchies and in the Islamic madrasah and social organizations. The authority of the new religious leaders was based on their knowledge of the new truths of the religions of Christ and Muhammad and, perhaps most importantly, on their possession of the means to advancement in the secular world, a modern educational system. It was in general unrelated to the traditional aristocracy and divorced from its worldview, which had heretofore provided the religious basis of the society, although a number of traditional rulers in Lower Simalungun embraced Islam early in the twentieth century and made it in effect their state religion. Although the religious elite offered no challenges to the political power of the traditional aristocracy--Moslem leaders and religious teachers in particular were too closely tied to the radja and, in any event, Dutch power made challenges well-nigh impossible--its influence in the society was pervasive.

By the 1930's, then, the traditional elite had begun to lose its grip on Simalungun society. While still dominant politically, its authority (particularly that of the radja over lesser aristocrats) was heavily dependent on Dutch



support and only grudgingly accepted by the new elites which had achieved status in non-traditional spheres of activity. The Japanese occupation contributed further to the differentiation of elites and the decline of the aristocracy. Higher positions in the plantation and government bureaucracies than had previously been open to them were given to Simalungun Batak (and other Indonesians). At the village level resentment toward the aristocracy became more widespread, as the rulers participated in the organization of the infamous Japanese forced labor system. Many villagers left home for the Japanese work gangs and never returned. Finally, military and para-military training combined with nationalist indoctrination greatly enlarged the group of young, partially-educated Simalungun Batak willing openly to oppose the continuation of traditional political institutions. When the Japanese withdrew, it was this latter group which dealt the death blow to the kingdoms of Simalungun.

Political loyalties in traditional Simalungun were primarily territorial rather than based on kinship, and were directed toward the village and keradjaan in which the individual resided and to whose rulers he was subject. The typical Simalungun Batak village contains a variety of marga and sub-marga groups, many of which are unrelated by marriage or descent.<sup>7</sup> The basic unit of social interaction in the Simalungun village, the sanina, consists of the sons of ego's father or grandsons of his father's father and is not large enough or inclusive enough to provide a basis for village-wide social organization. For assistance in clearing his fields and harvesting and processing his crops, for protection against attack by outsiders and against the depredations of evil spirits, the individual in traditional society was dependent on fellow villagers with whom he often had no kinship ties and on the political leadership of the village and of the more inclusive units of which it was a part.

In the post-colonial period loyalties to village and keradjaan have continued in the form of regional identifications. Regionalism has been particularly strong in subdistrict Raja, where the Simalungun language is considered to be purest and whose nineteenth-century Radja Rondahaim is celebrated as an anti-colonial hero, and in subdistrict Purba, once the target of Rondahaim's expansionism. It has become

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7. Simalungun Batak recognize four Simalungun marga: Saragih, Damanik, Purba and Sinaga. Each of these is further divided into several sub-marga, e. g., Purba Siboro, Saragih Garingging. On the origins of the Simalungun marga, see J. Wismar Saragih, "Silsilah Marga2 di Simalungun," (A Chronicle of the Marga in Simalungun), unpub. paper presented to the Seminar on Simalungun Culture, P. Siantar, 1964.

increasingly common to find individuals who identify themselves both by marga and region (e. g., Johannes Purba-Raja, signifying marga Purba from subdistrict Raja) rather than simply by marga or sub-marga. The division of the Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS) into three districts (one centered in Raja, one in Purba and the third encompassing the rest of Simalungun and East Sumatra) also reflects the cleavage between the two areas, as does the church's concern to maintain a regional balance in its central leadership.

Supra-village kinship ties have generally been weak and ineffectual as determinants of political loyalties. In the pre-colonial period communication between keradjaan was difficult and infrequent, genealogies were not kept, and ties with relatives who migrated from one area to another were quickly lost. Despite improved communications and increased travel the Simalungun Batak has continued to identify primarily with his village and only secondarily with fellow members of his sub-marga or marga. In recent years a few attempts have been made to establish marga associations in Siantar and Medan. These associations, at least in Siantar, have had a negligible effect on social organization within the Simalungun Batak community. In some cases, however, particularly where marga divisions have coincided in part with territorial loyalties (e. g., the large number of members of sub-marga Purba Pakpak in the former keradjaan of Purba and of various subdivisions of marga Saragih in keradjaan Raja), regional cleavages have had some kinship overtones.

Traditional cleavages in Simalungun society, whether regional or kinship-based, have been greatly mitigated in the twentieth century by the emergence of new reference groups which cut across rather than reinforce the older divisions. With the introduction of Christianity and Islam many Simalungun Batak of all marga and regions turned to the new religious leadership for guidance in secular as well as in spiritual affairs.<sup>8</sup> Others, particularly in the more remote villages relatively unaffected by the events of the twentieth century, remained undivided in their loyalties to the *ancien regime*. Since the traditional aristocracy everywhere tolerated and sometimes closely cooperated with the religious leaders, this cleavage never developed into open

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8. The (anonymous) Simalungun Batak author of the official GKPS history of Christianity in Simalungun, 60 Tahun Indjil Kristus di Simalungun (Sixty Years of the Gospel of Christ in Simalungun), P. Siantar, 1963, wrote that "seeing the Christians who were always going to church there were those who were of the opinion that the radja of the Christians was the minister, because his regulations were always followed." p. 24.

hostility, either at the village level or between the two elite groups.

During the Japanese occupation and the nationalist revolution, still another segment of the Simalungun populace rejected both the traditional and the religious elites in favor of the new revolutionary leadership in organizations such as Barisan Harimau Liar (Wild Tiger Legion, a PNI-affiliated guerilla organization with an almost entirely Simalungun Batak membership in the region). This final cleavage, which reached its greatest intensity in the Social Revolution of 1946,<sup>9</sup> ran much deeper in Simalungun society, as it required many individuals to take a direct stand for or against the traditional elite. Although strongest in keradjaan Purba and parts of keradjaan Pane bordering on Lake Toba, the revolutionary group included members of all four Simalungun Batak marga and subjects of every keradjaan in Simalungun.

Finally, all of these cleavages, the traditional and the modern, have been tempered by the position of the Simalungun Batak as a minority group in their homeland. Of a total regency/municipality population estimated at nearly 650,000 in 1963 and a provincial population of over five million, probably fewer than 200,000 are Simalungun Batak. In the nineteenth century there was little unity among the Simalungun people, who identified themselves as residents of a particular village and subjects of a particular keradjaan rather than as members of a common ethnic group. Hostility toward the

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9. The Social Revolution in Simalungun began on the night of March 3, 1946, when four radja (Raja, Purba, Pane and Sili-makuta) and many lesser aristocrats and members of their families were killed. The radja of Dolok Silau was protected by his subjects and escaped assassination, as did the radja of Siantar and Tanah Djawa who were in the city of Siantar at the time. The Social Revolution (at least in Simalungun) was not a popular uprising or an expression of mass hatred. Rather it was a well-planned, carefully executed series of assassinations organized by a few armed youth groups and carried out almost entirely in the course of one night. The identity of the specific groups and individuals who participated in the Social Revolution is still unclear because of the secrecy which surrounded the assassinations and the reluctance of the participants to talk about the period. The consensus of opinion among informants who were active revolutionaries or civil servants in Simalungun at the time was that the most important role in both the planning and execution of the assassinations was played by BHL; pro-Communist and other youth groups were probably also involved, particularly in Lower Simalungun.

non-Simalungun Batak, although it certainly existed, was seen not as something pitting one ethnic group against another but as pitting one village or kingdom against another; it was in any case largely confined to the border areas. It was not until the migrations of the twentieth century that the Simalungun Batak, increasingly in competition with individuals from different cultures, begin to feel a sense of ethnic unity based on common language, culture and membership in one of the four Simalungun marga. The intensity of this new identification varied from individual to individual depending upon the nature and extent of cultural contact, but by the end of the colonial period few Simalungun Batak were unaware of their common identity and of the differences between them and the various migrant groups. As a result of these differences and of the threat presented by non-Simalungun Batak influential in the economic and political life of the region, *kesatuan Simalungun--Simalungun unity--*became a principal theme of post-independence political activity.

#### The 1950's: The Rise and Fall of Ethnic Political Organizations

After a brief lull following the dismantling of the Dutch-sponsored State of East Sumatra (NST), Simalungun Batak politicians began to prepare for the coming election campaign. The community's political leadership was divided into three broad groups: the remnants of the traditional aristocracy and other individuals sympathetic to the idea of a political organization which would directly represent the Simalungun Batak; the religious leadership, and the former leaders of militantly revolutionary organizations. Simalungun Batak civil servants, merchants and entrepreneurs did not form a separate bloc but instead affiliated themselves with one of the three groups.

Most members of the first group of leaders became active in KRSST (Kebangunan Rakjat Simalungun Sumatera Timur, The Awakening of the Simalungun People of East Sumatra), an ethnic organization restricted to the Simalungun Batak community.<sup>10</sup> KRSST's objective was to obtain a seat in the national Parliament or, failing that, representation in the proposed North

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10. Another ethnic organization, AKRAP ST (Aksi Rakjat Pemilihan Sumatera Timur, Action of the Voting People of East Sumatra), designed to appeal to all the indigenous peoples of East Sumatra (Simalungun Batak, Karo Batak and Coastal Malays) also contested the elections. In Simalungun AKRAP ST won only 1,776 votes, one third of which were cast in subdistrict Dolok Pardamaian, the home of the organization's Simalungun chairman.

Sumatran provincial legislature on behalf of the entire Simalungun Batak community. Financed by a wealthy Simalungun Batak businessman in Djakarta, Hadji Djaramil Damarik,<sup>11</sup> the organization was led in the region by Badja Purba, the former head of Dolok Batunanggar, a subdivision of keradjaan Pane. Its leadership at the regency and subdistrict levels cut across most of the cleavages described in the preceding section, including former aristocrats and non-aristocrats from all regions and of all marga as well as Christians, Moslems (including the head of Dolok Batunanggar and the Djakarta businessman), and the followers of traditional religious practices. Only the militant revolutionaries and their supporters remained entirely aloof.

The religious elite was divided in its partisan loyalties. The Protestant leadership was heavily cross-pressured, torn between a desire to support the party of Protestantism (Parkindo) and yet deeply sympathetic to the objectives of KRSST. For many years Protestant leaders had opposed North Tapanuli influence in their church. By 1952, with the establishment of the HKBP-S, they had succeeded in gaining autonomy within the Batak church, but their final goal--total separation--was not to be achieved for another decade. To many of them Parkindo was not much more than the political extension of the HKBP, and was similarly dominated by North Tapanuli Batak. They saw little possibility of an influential role for Simalungun Batak in Parkindo. Some ministers and teachers resolved their internal conflict by limiting their political propaganda to anti-Communist and, less frequently, anti-PNI sermons and speeches. Smaller groups came out boldly for Parkindo or for KRSST. Since Simalungun Batak Catholic lay leaders in subdistrict Purba played a prominent role in the regency leadership of Partai Katholik, the Catholic leadership found it less difficult to resolve the conflict between church and suku. By supporting Partai Katholik one could be pro-suku and pro-church at the same time.

The Moslem elite was also divided. Nahdatul Ulama was established by Simalungun Batak who had been closely associated with the traditional aristocracy and had participated in NST. With the support of the Simalungun Moslem community and whatever other ethnic groups (such as Coastal Malays and Javanese) could be attracted to the party, and the financial assistance of NU's national leadership, they hoped to carve an independent role for themselves in local politics. Other Moslems, similar in background to the NU leaders, felt that a party based largely on an appeal to perhaps fifteen per cent of the ethnic group would be too small to play an effective role either in Simalungun or in the national NU organization, and

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11. He was later to become a Vice-Minister in the PRRI rebel government.

gave their support instead to KRSST. Finally, Simalungun Moslem leaders who had fought against the Dutch found both KRSST and NU unattractive and turned to Masjumi.

The secular revolutionary leadership was less divided in its partisan affiliation than the religious elite. Most Simalungun Batak who had participated in the Revolution were members of Barisan Harimau Liar. In the early 1950's the former leaders of BHL who continued to be politically active were, with few exceptions, PNI supporters and leaders.

The results of the 1955 elections showed that the Simalungun Batak community, and particularly its Protestant and animistic sub-groups, was highly receptive to the idea of direct political representation of the ethnic group. KRSST's leaders had framed their appeal not in terms of loyalty to the traditional aristocracy or a restoration of traditional rule (which they knew to be impossible) but rather on the basis of ethnic solidarity in opposition to the migrant groups. Its popularity in Upper Simalungun was comparable to the support which the ostensibly non-ethnic parties Parkindo, Masjumi and PNI received from the North Tapanuli, South Tapanuli and Javanese communities respectively. In the seven subdistricts of Upper Simalungun KRSST's mean percentage of the vote was 43.7 per cent, and the party won a clear majority in Raja and Silau Kahean. In the regency as a whole, with 8.3 per cent of the vote, it was the fifth largest party. (See Table 1)

The second most popular party in Upper Simalungun was the PNI, with a mean 19.8 per cent of the vote. The PNI's support was concentrated in subdistricts Silimakuta and Dolok Silau (where many of the voters were Karo Batak) and subdistricts Dolok Pardamaian and Purba, both of which were former BHL strongholds. The low PNI vote in Raja (7.8 per cent) reflected not the regional cleavage between Raja and Purba but rather the absence in that subdistrict of indigenous BHL-PNI leadership. (The best-known leader of BHL in Raja left North Sumatra soon after the Revolution.) Of the remaining parties, Parkindo won a mean 9.3 per cent of the vote in Upper Simalungun (with its greatest support in Raja, Raja Kahean and Dolok Pardamaian) and Masjumi obtained 7.2 per cent, which included most of the Simalungun Batak Moslem voters in the region and a substantial proportion of non-Simalungun Batak in Silau Kahean and Raja Kahean. Partai Katholik's vote, less than 4 per cent of the regional total, was concentrated in subdistrict Purba. NU received negligible support in Upper Simalungun, with most of its small vote in the regency/municipality coming from Siantar city and the Lower Simalungun subdistricts of Bandar, Bosar Maligas, Tanah Djawa and Sidamanik.

Table 1

The KRSST Vote in Simalungun in the  
1955 Parliamentary Elections

<u>Subdistrict</u>	<u>KRSST Vote</u> (as % of subd. vote)
Raja	61.8%
Silau Kahean	51.3
Purba	43.8
Dolok Silau	43.7
Raja Kahean	37.6
Silimakuta	29.1
Dolok Pardamaian	22.7
Subtotal: Upper Simalungun	43.7
All Other Subdistricts (Mean)	3.2
Total: Simalungun Regency	8.3
Siantar City	2.0

Source: Adapted from Pemerintahan Daerah Tkt. II Simalungun, Daftar: Perhitungan hasil2 pemungutan suara dalam daerah Kabupaten Simalungun/Pemilihan Anggota Dewan Perwakilan Rakjat, 29 Sept., 1955 (Government of the Second Level Region of Simalungun, A list of the election results in the Regency of Simalungun/Election of the Members of the People's Representative Council).

Table 2

The Vote for PNI, Parkindo and Masjumi in  
Upper Simalungun, by Subdistrict (%)

<u>Subdistrict</u>	<u>PNI</u>	<u>Parkindo</u>	<u>Masjumi</u>
Raja	7.8%	14.5%	6.0%
Dolok Pardamaian	28.7	12.4	2.4
Purba	20.6	8.9	.4
Silimakuta	42.9	3.9	1.9
Dolok Silau	37.8	4.8	.2
Silau Kahean	4.9	2.9	23.0
Raja Kahean	9.0	13.5	20.6
Total	19.8	9.3	7.2

Source: See Table 1.

Despite its sizable vote in Upper Simalungun, KRSSST failed to achieve its objectives of national and/or provincial representation. By 1957, when the first regency DPRD<sup>12</sup> was inaugurated, its most prominent leadership had turned to other activities and organizations, allowing second-rank leaders to fill its three DPRD seats. Until formally dissolved in 1961,<sup>13</sup> KRSSST existed in name only, with no leadership other than its representatives in the DPRD and no organization in the subdistricts.

In December 1956 the North Sumatran army command stationed in Medan rebelled against the central government.<sup>14</sup> Although the rebels were quickly driven out of East Sumatra and into the highlands of North Tapanuli, the authority of the government was not fully restored in many rural areas of Simalungun until 1959. In these unsettled conditions a new organization called Rondahaim (after the former Radja of Raja) was created in Upper Simalungun by former KRSSST activists. Rondahaim's goals were twofold: (1) to provide protection to the Simalungun Batak community through its own para-military force and by establishing liaison with both rebel and government troops; and (2) to promote economic development in Upper Simalungun by organizing such projects as road building and school and market construction. Because of its sometimes heavy-handed attitude toward the local population, its tendency to dragoon villagers into its work gangs, and the fact that nearly all of its leaders were from Raja, Rondahaim was never widely supported. With the gradual return of security and the government presence in Upper Simalungun Rondahaim soon disappeared.

The army rebellion and its defeat precipitated a shift

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12. The DPRD was the predecessor of the present-day DPRD-GR, established in 1961. Membership in the DPRD was determined on the basis of each party's percentage of total regency votes in the 1955 Parliamentary elections. In the DPRD-GR, half of the seats are allotted to the parties, half to golongan karya (functional groups).
  13. Under Presidential Edict No. 7/1959 on the simplification of the party system. See Departemen Penerangan Republik Indonesia, Almanak Lembaga-Lembaga Negara dan Kepartaian, Djakarta, 1961, pp. 423-426.
  14. For a detailed analysis of the military situation in North Sumatra in 1956-57 see Smail, John R. W., "The Military Politics of North Sumatra, December 1956-October 1957", unpub. paper, Cornell University, n.d.



in political power in North Sumatra from civilian government to the military, and within the military from one faction to another. A state of war and seige (SOB), giving the army vastly increased powers over civilian government, was declared and not formally ended until 1963. Since the rebellious army officers were mostly North Tapanuli Batak, this group as a whole came under suspicion and its military and civilian leaders went into eclipse in provincial politics. Under the new army commander, Col. Djamin Gintings, a Karo Batak, the indigenous peoples of East Sumatra began to press claims for the division of North Sumatra into two provinces: East Sumatra, to be run by Karo and Simalungun Batak and Coastal Malays; and Tapanuli, to be left to the North and South Tapanuli Batak.

The organizational expression of the movement for East Sumatran autonomy was BAPOST (Badan Penuntut Otonomi Sumatera Timur, Body to Demand East Sumatran Autonomy), established some months prior to the army rebellion but not really active until 1957. In Simalungun, where it had branches at the regency/municipality and subdistrict levels, BAPOST's leadership was more inclusive than that of previous ethnic-based organizations. Besides including members of the small Karo Batak and Coastal Malay communities, BAPOST was widely supported by the Simalungun Batak political elite irrespective of religious, regional and traditional-revolutionary cleavages. Only the few Simalungun Batak in the PKI, under party instructions, refused to support the movement. Within the PNI the emergence of BAPOST provided the first signs of dissension. Most Simalungun Batak in the regency and subdistrict PNI leadership became active BAPOST leaders, while the North and South Tapanuli Batak and Javanese in the party lent their support to GAS (Gerakan Anti-Separatis, Anti-Separatist Movement), an organization created to oppose BAPOST. Simalungun Batak affiliated with Parkindo also supported the movement for autonomy, increasing their alienation from the dominant North Tapanuli leadership (who, under suspicion as possible rebels, abstained from all political activity in this period). Despite apparent high-level support (particularly within the military), mass meetings, demonstrations and implied threats of violence, the demand for a separate East Sumatra was in the end unacceptable to the central government and BAPOST went the way of KRSST and Rondahaim.<sup>15</sup> In its wake it left

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15. By 1963-64 the issue of East Sumatran autonomy was dead as far as East Sumatrans were concerned, for their objectives had largely been realized. Although the provincial military commander was a Javanese, most military officers with territorial authority or command of troops in East Sumatra were indigenous East Sumatrans (with a high percentage of Karo Batak). In the sphere of civilian government, the North Sumatran governor was a Karo Batak and

an intensified sense of ethnic identity both among the Simalungun Batak and among their opponents. As the last of the ethnic organizations, it also left an organizational vacuum in Upper Simalungun.

#### The 1960's: An Organizational Vacuum

The fall of BAPOST signified the beginning of a new era in ethnic politics in Simalungun in which the organizational link between the Simalungun Batak villager and the urban political elite was practically non-existent, but ethnic influence in regency government markedly increased. In the 1950's ethnic organizations had proved singularly ineffective as means for gaining influence in government. The experience of KRSST had shown that, while an ethnic political party could win the support of a considerable segment of the Simalungun people, there were simply too few Simalungun Batak to enable such an organization to dominate regency politics, let alone play a role on the provincial or national stage. Equally important, the dissolution of KRSST and the failure of BAPOST made it abundantly clear that overt sukuism and regionalism were unacceptable to the national government. By the end of the decade Simalungun Batak politicians had lost their taste for ethnic organizations as such.

The organizational vacuum left by the decline and subsequent dissolution of KRSST has not been filled by any of the remaining parties. Regency-level party leaders have, in fact, paid less attention to Upper Simalungun than to any other part of the regency. While minimal organizational structures have been maintained, no attempts have been made to create mass membership parties or subsidiary organizations with regular programs of activity reaching into the daily lives of the population. Nor has there been a continuous link between the urban party leaders and the village population whom they claim to represent in party and government councils. Parkindo's regency leadership, including its Simalungun Batak member, has almost totally ignored the sub-district party leaders in Upper Simalungun. NU, Partai Katholik and the PKI have also been largely inactive in the region. Simalungun Batak in the branch PNI organization

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most second-level Regional Heads were East Sumatrans, many of them born in the regencies and municipalities which they headed. The autonomy shoe was now on the other foot, and demands for the separation of North Sumatra into two provinces began to be heard from the North Tapanuli Batak. In early 1964 a resolution to this effect was passed by the DPRD-GR of North Tapanuli. For discussion of the autonomy movement at the East Sumatran level, see Smail, op. cit., pp. 36-39.

have communicated more frequently with the subdistrict and village leadership, whose support they need at Party Conferences, but they have for the most part neglected the tasks of party- and organization-building. In the late 1950's and 1960's, some Simalungun Batak in Siantar became active in IPKI (mainly former KRSST supporters and descendants of the aristocracy), Murba and to a lesser extent Partindo (former revolutionaries), but they made no substantial effort to organize in the villages.

The failure of the national political parties to develop a mass base in Upper Simalungun has not been entirely the fault of the regency party leadership, for each of the national parties is limited in terms of its potential support. Roman Catholics and Moslems are too few to enable Partai Katholik and NU to play a prominent role in the region, and Parkindo has been handicapped by its identification with the North Tapanuli Batak community. Among the large percentage of the village population which supported KRSST and felt little enmity toward the traditional aristocracy, there has been active hostility toward the revolutionary leaders of the PNI, PKI, Murba and Partindo. The PKI has been further burdened by its identification with atheism and its unwillingness to represent ethnic interests, such as the demand for East Sumatran autonomy. IPKI's leaders, while of aristocratic blood and formerly supporters of KRSST, are either civil servants or youths without substantial political experience or contacts in the villages. The first-rank leaders of KRSST have in the 1960's turned away from politics altogether.

In the absence of partisan links, upward communication between the Upper Simalungun villager and the regency government has been severely hampered. Official government channels, in the persons of the subdistrict officer (appointed by the Regional Head in his capacity as regent) and the village head (according to law popularly elected), have not provided an effective alternative to the party organizations. The relationship between the subdistrict officer and the village head has been largely formal and paternalistic. During the Revolution and for some years afterward most subdistrict officers in Upper Simalungun were outsiders who did not speak the Simalungun language. In recent years these posts have been given primarily to Simalungun Batak, but their function--to represent the central government to the people rather than the people to the government--has, in the eyes of the villagers, remained the same. Communication between the subdistrict officer and the people within his jurisdiction is largely limited to meetings with the village heads, called to convey instructions emanating from the Regional Head or his superiors. The village head tends to be somewhat awed in the presence of higher authority, and his sense

of subordination is increased by the formality of the setting, his imperfect understanding of the Indonesian language (used as the official language at such meetings) and by the fact that the subdistrict officer is normally flanked by the subdistrict representatives of the police and army.

The village head also knows from personal experience that attempts to soften the impact of government instructions (e. g., a reduction in the quantity of rice which his village must supply to the government at a fixed price below the market value) or to make other requests of the subdistrict officer will be mostly unavailing. In one case a village in subdistrict Raja had been trying to obtain government assistance in the building of a road for seven years without success. In this instance the main channel used by the villagers was the official village head-subdistrict officer link, although direct representation to regency and even provincial administrators had also been made. The local military and police representatives, most of whom are not Simalungun Batak and do not live in the subdistrict to which they are posted, are even less useful as channels for the expression of village demands than the subdistrict officer.

Even the village head is often regarded in Upper Simalungun as the last link in the downward chain of command rather than the first link in an upward chain of representation. Although he is popularly elected or--as has been the case when vacancies have occurred in recent years--chosen by the subdistrict officer after consultation with prominent villagers, the consolidation of small villages or hamlets into village complexes for purposes of administrative efficiency has meant that to many of his constituents the village head is an outsider.

The village complex of Baringin Raja in subdistrict Raja, for example, consists of five separate hamlets. In the last village election, held in 1953, three candidates, one from each of the three largest hamlets, were nominated for the post of village head. The vote was divided along hamlet lines, with the candidate from the largest hamlet emerging victorious. In 1964, when the author visited Baringin Raja, the village head was held in low esteem, particularly outside his own hamlet. Considered primarily a tax- and rice-collector and bearer of instructions, he rarely visited the other hamlets under his authority and played no role in their internal affairs. Hamlet disputes were taken to him as a last resort and only after all attempts at mediation by family members and village elders learned in the adat had failed. According to the villagers, who jealously guarded their traditions of hamlet autonomy, such failures were extremely rare.

The subdistrict and village branches of the Front Nasional, an institution created to provide a channel for the dissemination of official propaganda and to enable the government to exercise greater control over the activities of the political parties, have also been ineffective as instruments for the expression of popular demands. In the subdistricts of Upper Simalungun, FN members (appointed by the Regional Head upon recommendations from the subdistrict officer) are mostly unaffiliated with the political parties, reside in the subdistrict capital and have little contact with the villages. The seventeen-member FN anak tjabang (sub-branch) in Raja, for example, consisted of the subdistrict officer (as chairman), the army representative, two representatives from the PNI, one representative each from the PKI, Parkindo and Partindo, six non-party school teachers and civil servants, the Protestant minister, two non-party farmers and one Raja businessman. It met infrequently and then only for the purpose of receiving instructions from the regency Front Nasional.

In the village the FN ranting (section) membership (appointed by the subdistrict officer on recommendations from the village head) usually contains a selection of village elders, church lay leaders, the local schoolteacher and, where they exist, political party representatives. Its use has been limited to its function as the terminal point for the dissemination of FN pamphlets and newsletters, whose contents are supposed to be passed on orally to the villagers. Most FN ranting members do not bother to read this literature, which they regard as irrelevant to their own and their village's problems.

Without effective political organizations or official governmental channels of communication, contact between the village and the regency government tends to be based on personal relationships. The link between the villager who goes to Siantar to make a request on behalf of his village and the government official or other member of the political elite who receives him may be the tie of family, village, region, past association or merely common membership in the ethnic group. Since the appointment of a Simalungun Batak as Regional Head (see below) the range of officials amenable to such contacts is fairly broad. Although not a party leader or member, the villager may also state his case to a party politician or member of the DPRD-GR who is a Simalungun Batak, or to an official of the church who will relay it to the appropriate government official. These channels have been employed much more commonly in recent years than they had been in the 1950's but with only limited success. A principal obstacle to the success of this informal and personal kind of representation, as to that of party-related representation, has been the relative powerlessness of the regency government and the lack of resources with which it can meet local demands.

During the period of martial law (1957-1963) the regional military commanders were of somewhat greater importance to the Simalungun Batak community as a source of social and political action. In Siantar city the army's regional commander from 1955 to 1958, Major T. S. Mardjana Saragih, was a Simalungun Batak.<sup>16</sup> In the period of greatest insecurity in the countryside, he became the critical link between the many villagers who fled Upper Simalungun for the safety of the city and the municipality government. As the ultimate possessor of authority under SOB, he was able to secure land and building permits and day-laborer jobs in the city government for the refugees. The combined regency/municipality army commander from 1961 to 1963, Major Jansen Saragih, was also a Simalungun Batak, and several local development projects, particularly the building of village schools, were carried out with his assistance. Plans for the construction of a commercially valuable connecting road between Raja and Sindarraja in subdistrict Raja Kahean under the army's civic mission program were also initiated by the army commander (who was a grandson of the former Radja of Raja) in this period. With the return to full civilian authority in 1963 the power and freedom of action permitted to the army leadership in Simalungun/Siantar diminished considerably. When a Karo Batak, Major Narangi Purba,<sup>17</sup> was subsequently appointed regional military commander, the link which this office had provided between the villagers of Upper Simalungun and the regency political process was broken.

#### Regency-Level Leadership: The Search for Unity Continues

While the Simalungun Batak political elite in Siantar has failed to develop an organizational base in the villages in recent years, its influence in regency-wide politics has increased considerably. The turning point in the group's fortunes came in 1960 with the appointment, after nomination by the DPRD, of a Simalungun Batak army officer, Major Radjamin Purba, as Regional Head. A Protestant (but married to a Moslem), born in the former keradjaan of Purba, and somewhat distantly related to the radja, the new Regional Head was a professional soldier who had spent most of his adult life in Java. Already well-connected nationally and

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16. This post was abolished in 1961 when the regency and municipality were combined to form a single military region.

17. Among the Karo, the Purba are regarded as a sub-marga of the Marga Tarigan; they are in no way connected with the Simalungun Purba.

with the provincial military leadership in Medan, his most critical problem was to build support in Simalungun. His first concern was to establish himself as a leader of his own ethnic community without, insofar as this was possible, alienating non-Simalungun Batak members of the regency political elite or jeopardizing his support in Medan and Jakarta. He adopted a strategy of cultivating both the Simalungun Batak urban elite (of nearly all parties and organizations) and simultaneously developing personal support in the villages independent of the party politicians.

The Regional Head's first major project after his inauguration, important for its symbolic as well as its practical value, was the asphaltting of the Haranggaol-Tiga Runggu road in Upper Simalungun. This project produced the first clash with PKI and (non-Simalungun Batak) PNI leaders in the DPRD, who were already opposed to him because of his provincial and national allies. In the ensuing years he continued his activities in Upper Simalungun, assisting in economic development projects such as the privately-financed planting of orange groves, arranging periodically for the supply of agricultural implements, seeds and fertilizer to the village population at fixed government prices, and so on. Where possible, he appointed Simalungun Batak subdistrict officers and other officials, such as the Head of the General Government Department (the immediate superior of the subdistrict officers), and he lobbied successfully in Medan for the appointment of Simalungun Batak to the posts of Head of Cultural Inspection and Head of the Agrarian Service. He has also been active in adat affairs, and in 1964 organized and financed an impressive and well-attended ceremony in which a prominent aristocratic ancestor's remains were moved to an elaborate new resting place.

The 1964 Seminar on Simalungun Culture, of which the Regional Head and other Simalungun Batak politicians were the chief organizers, provides an excellent illustration of the care taken to balance the need for ethnic support with the requirements of the national polity. The motto of the Seminar, hung over the main street of Siantar, was: Berantas Kebudayaan Asing, Bina Kebudayaan Nasional Bersumber Kebudayaan Daerah (Combat Foreign Culture, Build National Culture Rooted in Regional Culture). The first part of the motto reflected a campaign, instigated by the PKI and supported by President Sukarno and several political parties, to prohibit the importation of Western films and other paraphernalia of popular Western culture into Indonesia, the second part paid homage to Indonesian nationalism, and the third part was intended to win the support of the Simalungun Batak community.

In the selection of Seminar participants, the organizers were careful to exclude or to give only subordinate roles to

individuals linked with the traditional aristocracy and former KRSST activists, as well as some former leaders of BAPOST who were thought to be too openly "suku-minded". The result was to diminish the value of the Seminar as a scholarly conference designed to explore Simalungun culture (since the most prominent adat specialists were mostly former aristocrats and KRSST supporters) but to enhance its value as a demonstration to Djakarta (Ruslan Abdulgani, then Minister of Information, gave the opening speech on behalf of the government) of the suku's contributions to the Revolution and its loyalty to the regime. Despite the exclusion of "non-revolutionary" political leaders, the Seminar was well attended by delegates from all subdistricts with a substantial Simalungun Batak population and contributed handsomely to the organizers' reputations in the villages.

The Regional Head's greatest opportunity to unite the Simalungun Batak political elite under his leadership occurred shortly after his inauguration in 1960, when the old DPRD was abolished and machinery for the establishment of the new DPRD-GR was set in motion. Two nominees for each seat in the new body (to be divided among party and functional group representatives) were requested from all legal parties and organizations with the final choices to be made by the Governor of North Sumatra on the recommendations of the Regional Head of Simalungun and the provincial military commander (who was in turn to receive recommendations from the regency/municipality military commander). From each party and organization the Regional Head requested, and in most cases received, at least one Simalungun Batak nominee. For unorganized functional groups such as Adat, National Entrepreneurs, Cooperatives (of which there were many different kinds with no peak organization) and the Protestant and Catholic Religious Leadership he played a leading role in the actual selection of nominees. His support for NU and IPKI representation in the DPRD-GR (neither party had members in the DPRD) was also crucial. In the end, after months of complicated bargaining within the regency (mostly with the parties) and at the provincial level (mostly within the military), Simalungun Batak representation was increased from eight to fourteen, including two NU members, one member each from Parkindo, PKI, IPKI and Partai Katholik, and the representatives of the Police, Veterans (also a PNI leader), Protestant and Catholic Religious Leadership, Women (the chairman of the PNI's Wanita Demokrat), National Entrepreneurs (a PNI leader), Cooperatives and Adat (a KRSST representative in the old DPRD).<sup>18</sup> The army's seat in the new body went to a Karo

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18. In the old DPRD there were three Simalungun Batak members from KRSST and one each from the PNI, Parkindo, Masjumi, Partai Katholik and PSI.



Batak.

Since the inauguration of the DPRD-GR, cooperation between the "Simalungun bloc"<sup>19</sup> and the Regional Head has been close and, on matters of secondary concern to the party leadership, fairly effective. The bloc obtained informal representation on every committee of the DPRD-GR, enabling its members to keep the Regional Head informed of all committee activities designed to undermine his position or oppose his policies. It also lent support in committee and in the full Council to the Regional Head's annual budget recommendations and backed various projects, such as the acquisition of plantation concessions, as a means of increasing regency government revenues, and the production of a film on the Revolution in Simalungun, which he proposed.

Despite common ethnicity and the personal obligations of the Simalungun Batak members to the Regional Head, without whose support they would not have been appointed, the bloc has not been able to unite on important issues, particularly with regard to the selection of government personnel. As ethnic differences have constituted the chief nexus of factionalism within the parties,<sup>20</sup> so the principal obstacle to ethnic unity in the DPRD-GR has been loyalty to party. In the most extreme case, the PKI's Simalungun Batak DPRD-GR member has refused to attend the occasional meetings of the bloc or to cooperate with it in any way. The PNI's Simalungun Batak were more willing to promote bloc activities and even assumed informal positions of leadership within it. In 1963, however, they overstepped the boundaries of party discipline by signing a letter supporting the candidacy of the Regional Head for the Governorship, for which two of them were suspended and a third expelled from party membership.

The limitations of the Simalungun bloc were clearly in evidence during the selection by the DPRD-GR of a Regional Secretary (Sekretaris Daerah) in 1964. Many Simalungun Batak, within and without the DPRD-GR, took the position that such an important office, second only in responsibility to the Regional Head, ought to be given to a member of the indigenous ethnic group of the regency. Informal meetings, attended by some members of the bloc and by a number of civil servants and other interested individuals who were not members of the

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19. The designation given to the group by non-Simalungun Batak. Simalungun Batak in the DPRD-GR deny that such a bloc exists.

20. See my Politics in Simalungun: A Study in Political Integration, Ch. 9.

DPRD-GR, were held to discuss the problem, and pressure was applied on the Regional Head.

In the final analysis, however, non-ethnic factors played the deciding role. The Regional Head, perhaps afraid of losing Parkindo's support and concerned that an attempt to push a fellow Simalungun Batak might make him appear too suku-conscious<sup>21</sup> provided only hesitant leadership. Within the DPRD-GR, Simalungun Batak PNI members, under suspension because of their previous letter of support for the Regional Head, chose to adhere to the party line rather than support a Simalungun Batak candidate. NU's leaders insisted on a Moslem Simalungun Batak, Partai Katholik's DPRD-GR representative wanted the Secretaryship for himself, and even Parkindo's Simalungun Batak leader (although no longer permitted by law to be a party member because of his civil service rank) was apparently wary of future reprisals from his party. When the final selection took place the candidate of the PNI, PKI and Parkindo, a North Tapanuli Batak, won a two-thirds majority. The nominee generally assumed to be the candidate of the Simalungun bloc won only two votes, both from non-party functional group representatives. Rather than vote for a non-Moslem, NU walked out of the meeting. On this important issue kesatuan Simalungun was unattainable.

### Conclusions

Between the Simalungun Batak community and the political system of independent Indonesia there has evolved a unique pattern of relationships. Of the four major ethnic groups in the regency only the Simalungun Batak have failed to develop an affiliation with a national political party. Since the banning of KRSST most Simalungun Batak villagers have had no organizational link with the regency-level political process. What representation and influence they have in Siantar is based largely on personal relationships between individual residents of Upper Simalungun and members of the regency political elite, and on the need of the Regional Head and other urban politicians for community support. For the most part, however, the people of Upper Simalungun do not participate in regency politics, where

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21. A few months previously the Karo Batak Regional Head of the East Sumatran town of Tebing Tinggi who engineered the selection of a Karo Batak Regional Secretary, was attacked by the PKI, PNI and several other parties, and subsequently was "retooled."

the political game is played by the elite in an organizational vacuum.

Since the selection of a Simalungun Batak Regional Head in 1960, the urban party leaders have enjoyed a considerable increase in their influence in regency politics. This influence has been based not on the support of the villages, which they have been unable or unwilling to organize effectively, but on the patronage of the Regional Head and his provincial and national allies. In the years 1960-1964 cooperation among the members of the elite, cutting across marga and regional divisions and even to some extent religious and traditional-revolutionary cleavages, was possible on many issues. Confronted by a choice between suku and party, however, cooperation could not be maintained. Simalungun unity, rooted as much in the personal ambitions of the politicians as in their desire to advance the interests of the suku, has proved to be a fragile flower.

The transition from traditional to colonial to post-independence politics has been a difficult one for the Simalungun Batak community. Small in numbers, internally diverse, hemmed in by other, larger ethnic groups, the suku and its leadership have been unable to play a significant role in the determination of their own destiny. Their most critical weakness has been their inability to affiliate with a national political party, for it is only through some form of supra-local coalition, on a multi-ethnic basis, that the group can hope to enter the mainstream of Indonesian political life. The representation of some group interests through the provincial army hierarchy and through the army officer who serves as Regional Head has provided a partial substitute for affiliation with a national party, particularly in recent years when the role of the military in authoritative decision-making has been much greater than that of the parties. This kind of representation does not, however, provide a stable basis for representation in the political process. Army officers, by the nature of their profession, are normally far removed from their cultural origins and respond more readily to stimuli coming from within the military than to demands emanating from their ethnic group. Their relative strength as members of particular internal army factions is derived not from any links with those outside the army whose interests they may from time to time articulate, but rather from factors internal to the army itself (e. g., the 1956-57 coup, which ended in the strengthening of Karo Batak and secondarily Simalungun Batak, at the expense of North Tapanuli Batak). To depend entirely on army officers for the representation of one's interests means to be at the mercy of the vagaries of internal army politics.

Suku Simalungun is caught in a dilemma. More than any

other group in the regency, the Simalungun Batak villagers of Upper Simalungun have been cut off from the political processes of independent Indonesia. The only kind of organization which has been able to win their support has been based on ethnic exclusiveness, a principle which is unacceptable to the dominant political elite and dysfunctional for the achievement of the group's individual and collective goals. Conversely, those few Simalungun Batak politicians, most of them residents of Siantar, who associated themselves with national political parties have been unable to build support among their potential constituencies in the villages. The Simalungun people and their leadership have thus not been able to develop the kind of political organization, rooted in the villages and linked with the national political system, which might enable them over time to achieve effective representation and a measure of integration into the national political process. Moreover, with continued army dominance of Indonesian political life, the prospects for the development of effective and influential political organization do not seem bright.

#### Appendix I

The relationship between the traditional kingdoms (keradjaan) and the present sub-districts (ketjamatan) is readily apparent from a comparison of Map 2 above with the map of the same size depicting the traditional kingdoms in The General Agricultural Condition of Simeloengoen, Gunseibu--Kezaibu, Pematang Siantar, 2602 (1942). It should also be noted, however, that the Dutch "regularized" kingdom boundaries as you find them in The General Agricultural map and on pp. 1-3 of that same source. The districts were in the Dutch time the center of colonial administrative services, and they were just taken over by the Republic and renamed ketjamatan, with the exception of district Pane proper, which seemed unwieldy to the bupati and was split into Pane and Dolok Pardamaian, and also the exceptions of keradjaan Purba and Silimakuta, which were small and not subdivided into districts, so themselves became ketjamatan. The seven kingdoms and the corresponding present-day ketjamatan are as follows: 1. Siantar (Sidamanik, Bandar, Siantar); 2. Tanah Djawa (Parapat, Balata, Dolok Panribuan, Bosar Maligas, Tanah Djawa); 3. Pane (Dolok Batunanggar, Pane, Dolok Pardamaian); 4. Raja (Raja Kahean, Raja); 5. Dolok Silau (Silau Kahean, Dolok Silau); 6. Purba (Purba); 7. Silimakuta (Silimakuta).

